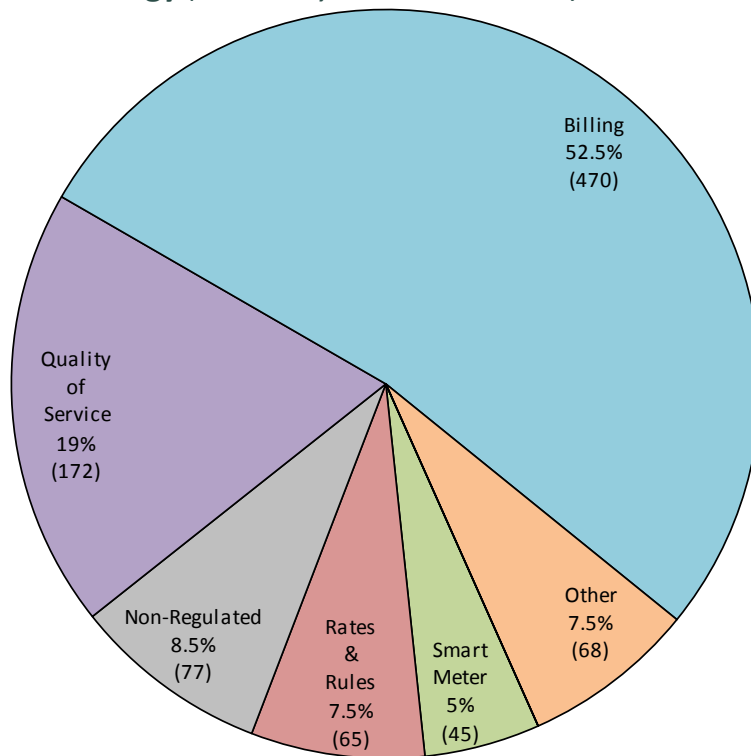


# California Public Utilities Commission

## January 2013

897 Consumer Contacts\* to the Consumer Affairs Branch (CAB) on  
Energy (Electricity and Natural Gas) Utilities



Tables below contain the specific topics that make up the larger categories (such as Billing). The most common consumer topics are listed from highest to lowest contact volume within each category.

Billing Category	
Questions and Complaints Received by CAB	
<i>Identifies most common customer topics related to billing in the current month</i>	
Topic	Description
<b>Disputed Bill</b>	When a consumer challenges any item on their utility bill.
<b>Payment Arrangements</b>	Consumer needs assistance negotiating payments for current or past due bills.
<b>High Bill</b>	Issues regarding bills that are higher than usual without any known reason for an increase.
<b>Disputed Customer of Record</b>	Occurs when a consumer is being held responsible for an unpaid balance due to usage by a previous customer.
<b>Deposits</b>	Utility requires a deposit to reconnect, reestablish or continue service due to a history of nonpayment or late payments.
<b>Estimated Billing</b>	Consumers challenging that the utility provider did not record meter usage accurately or that their bill is being estimated without a meter reading.

<b>Quality of Service Category</b> <b>Questions and Complaints Received by CAB</b> <i>Identifies most common customer topics related to Quality of Service in the current month</i>	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Disconnection</b>	Issues regarding the termination of services.
<b>Service</b>	Complaint regarding perceived quality, level or delivery of services.
<b>Outage</b>	Any disruption in service. These disruptions are not related to nonpayment or late payment.
<b>Delayed Orders/Missed Appointments</b>	Complaints regarding to a utility missing a scheduled appointment.
<b>Refusal to Serve</b>	Issues occurring when a utility provider refuses to provide services to a customer or given location because of unpaid prior bills, safety issues, or prior misuse of services.

[Go to top of page](#)

<b>SmartMeter Category</b> <b>Questions and Complaints Received by CAB</b> <i>Identifies most common customer topics related to SmartMeter in the current month</i>	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>SmartMeter</b>	Digital meters replacing analog meters used to measure a customer's consumption of a utility, such as electricity or natural gas.
<b>Opt Out</b>	Issues regarding the CPUC's rules or utility practices about allowing consumers to retain an existing analog meter or have a SmartMeter removed and replaced with an analog meter.
<b>Health</b>	When a consumer alleges that SmartMeter radio frequency emissions are affecting the quality of health in their household.

[Go to top of page](#)

<b>Rates &amp; Rules Category</b> <b>Questions and Complaints Received by CAB</b> <i>Identifies most common customer topics related to Rates &amp; Rules in the current month</i>	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Baseline</b>	Issues regarding the quantity and price of a residential customer's energy allowance for basic energy needs provided at a lower rate.
<b>Energy Efficiency Programs</b>	Issues regarding the programs offered by the CPUC to encourage energy efficiency investments in homes and businesses.
<b>Low Income Programs</b>	Issues regarding the programs offered customers that are eligible for lower rates based on income.
<b>Safety</b>	Issues regarding any condition which could impact the safety of a household, business, or the public.
<b>CARE Recertification</b>	Issues regarding the California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) program which assists low income energy consumers.
<b>Balance/Level Pay Plan</b>	Issues regarding fixed monthly bill payments that are offered to consumers to even out payments over fixed time period.

[Go to top of page](#)

<b>Non-Regulated Category</b> <b>Questions and Complaints Received by CAB</b> <i>Identifies most common customer topics related to Non-Regulated in the current month</i>	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Non-Jurisdictional</b>	CPUC does not have authority over the particular issue.
<b>Company practice</b>	Issues regarding utility processes not related to the oversight of the CPUC such as operational decisions, labor relations, decisions to consolidate work force, or determining where a utility can provide.
<b>Surcharges/Taxes</b>	Issues regarding a surcharge, fee or tax imposed by a government entity such as a city, county, state, or Federal government or allowed by the CPUC.
<b>Property Restoration/Debris Removal</b>	Issues regarding a utility provider's failure to remove construction materials from a consumer's property.

[Go to top of page](#)

<b>Other Category</b> <b>Questions and Complaints Received by CAB</b> <i>Identifies most common customer topics related to Other in the current month</i>	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Rate Protest</b>	Complaints regarding a pending or approved CPUC rate decision.
<b>Pending Assignment</b>	Complaints and questions recently received and under initial review.

[Go to top of page](#)

\* Contacts consist of phone calls, electronic submissions, and letters to the Consumer Affairs Branch of the CPUC. Contacts are displayed by category. Specific topics within each category are described in this table.